

## **EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

### **Meeting of September 2, 2009**

Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center  
3300 Briggs Chaney Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

**Members Present:** Bill Strassberger (Chair); Anthony Ramirez (Secretary); Eric G. Luedtke (Parliamentarian); Vanessa Ali; Thomas J. Aylward; Kim Bobola, Ph.D.; Amjad M. Chaudhry, Marva R. Deskins, Esq; G. Stanley Doore; Peter Myo Khin; Allan Mulligan; Dwayne H. Parris; Alfreda H. Payne, Ph.D.; Anthony Ramirez; Odessa Shannon; Benoy Thomas.

**Members Absent:** John J. Fausti, Esq. (Vice Chair); David M. Kochanski, Esq.

**Staff:** Joy Nurmi, (Director, Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center), Chuck Crisostomo (Asst. Director, Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center) and Anjoo Chohda (SEAA, Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center)

**Guests:** Councilmember Nancy Navarro, District 4; Frank Carouso (GLCA); Floyd O. May (Cross Creek Club Homeowners Association); Jeanette Der Bedrosian (Gazette reporter); Mark Pharaoh (ECRAB); Teddy Wu (University of MD); Barbara Foresti (White Oak Master Plan); Terry Blount-Williams (East County Recreation Advisory Board); Adrienne Lees (GCCA); Dolly Kildee (Staff, District 4 Councilmember Nancy Navarro's office); Mara M. Parker (Staff, Councilmember Marc Elrich's office); Selena Singleton (Congresswoman Donna Edwards, Maryland's 4th congressional district office) and Tracee Matthias (Director, TRiO Educational Talent Search, Montgomery College, Wheaton)

Chair Strassberger welcomed everyone to the 2009-10 session of the board. He spoke about the significant contribution of Stuart Rochester, a longtime civic leader in East County who recently passed away.. A moment of silence was observed in his honor.

**Citizen's Forum:** Asked the guests to introduce themselves and share their concerns with the board. The floor was opened for questions.

**Guests** – gave a brief introduction.

**Frank Carouso-** this summer, he worked with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation on a tree replacement program. Lots of trees are dead or diseased on Ballinger and West Hall Drives. Last week about 48 trees were cut down on West Hall drive. He would like to see the other trees removed.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:25 p.m.

**Chair Strassberger** – mentioned two speakers will be presenting to the board. Councilmember Nancy Navarro, District 4 and Chief Richard Bowers, Fire and Rescue Department. Welcomed Councilmember Nancy Navarro to address the Board

**Speaker- Nancy Navarro, Councilmember, District 4**

Ms. Navarro thanked the Board for the invitation. It has been officially three months since she was sworn in as a Councilmember. Last week, she conducted a Foreclosure Seminar at the Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center. Councilmember Navarro gave an overview of what her office has been working on since her appointment on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Councilmember Navarro highlighted on the following topics: Third District Police Station at the Milestone property and the proposed affordable housing for that site; the Zoning Text Amendment she introduced (ZTA 09-05) and the storage facility proposed in Burtonsville; a letter she sent to the Planning Board chair, Royce Hanson, on the need to keep in mind the vision for life science projects in the East County as the Planning Board works through the Gaithersburg West Master Plan and proposals for the life sciences center there; and the difficult work ahead on the County budget.

Councilmember Navarro mentioned that she is on the Council's Management and Fiscal Policy Committee and the Health and Human Services Committee.

The floor was opened for suggestions, questions and answers.

Conclusion – Nancy Navarro thanked the board and looks forward to working with issues and concerns of the residents.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Chair Strassberger asked for a review of the minutes of the ECCAB Meeting of July 1, 2009.

Anthony Ramirez requested a minor modification on the meeting time of Service Committee.

**[September 2, 2009 - 1]** A motion to approve the minutes of July 1, with the edits suggested by Anthony Ramirez was offered. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

**Director's Report – Joy Nurmi**

Distributed copy of the documents emailed to members. Mentioned that the Center is going green and will henceforth email the Director's report and attachments for member review rather than providing photocopies. The documents distributed are:

Director's Report

**ZTA 09-05 Burtonsville Overlay Zone** – The Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee is scheduled to take this up on September 21<sup>st</sup> at 2 p.m. (Letter attached).

**Bills 21-09 & 20-09** – **UPDATE:** On October 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. Council's Management and Fiscal Policy Committee is scheduled to develop final recommendations on Bills 21-09, Boards, Committees and Commissions – Amendments, and 20-09, Boards, Committees and Commissions – Committee Evaluation Review Board (CERB) recommendations. Earlier at its June 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, the MFP Committee took straw vote (3-0) not to support the bills.

**East County National Night Out** – On August 4<sup>th</sup>, the Center had a hugely successful National Night Out with its co-sponsors: the 3<sup>RD</sup> District Police, the East County Recreation Center, the Praisner Recreation Center, Praisner Library and local apartment communities. Approximately 250 residents came out to enjoy the music, face painting, three-on-three basketball, moonbounce and many other fun activities.

**Fairland Park** – The Council approved the acquisition of Fairland Park on July 14<sup>th</sup>. A copy of the Council president’s letter is attached.

**Fairland Road Improvements** – The improvements promised to the community following the tragic pedestrian fatality involving a 29 year-old woman are complete. On August 5<sup>th</sup>, County Executive Ike Leggett joined community members and Center staff on Fairland Road. The County’s Department of Transportation outlined the improvements:

- Bus stop improvements near Colefair Drive, Fairridge Drive, and Westwind Drive that included bump-outs to calm traffic, bus pads with kneewalls, sidewalk connections, crosswalks and signing;
- Bump-outs with a crosswalk and signing near the Twin Farms Swim Club;
- Bump-outs at Partridge Drive;
- Traffic signals at Tamarack Road and Serpentine Road.
- Average travel speeds have been reduced from nearly 50 miles per hour (MPH) to about 40 MPH;
- Signed and marked bus stop crossings to enhance safety for transit passengers;
- Signalized crossings at Tamarack and Serpentine Way to enhance safety for both pedestrians and motorists; and
- Traffic signals to provide gaps in traffic, giving motorists traveling into or out of neighborhoods at non-signalized locations more opportunity to turn onto Fairland Road.

**Burtonsville Business District** – The ECRSC took the new director of the Department of Economic Development (DED), Steve Silverman, on a tour of the Burtonsville Business area on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. We met with Mr. Silverman and a representative of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) about the revitalization of Burtonsville in late August. DHCA submitted a grant application to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development requesting \$300,000 in funding for two projects

Develop and implement façade design concepts and standards for the commercial core businesses along MD route 198.	\$125,000
Design and implement gateway identification signage to boost the Community’s sense of place. Design and install greenscape enhancements to act as buffers between pedestrians and traffic.	\$175,000

No match is required. This will complement projects in our CIP.

**MD 650 and Quaint Acres Drive Stoplight** – State Highway Administration (SHA) responded to the community’s letters and emails asking for a stoplight at this intersection, advising us that SHA will review the request and respond when their review is complete.

**Community Service Day** - Now more than ever, our community nonprofits, businesses, schools, and civic groups can work together on Community Service Day, the weekend of October 24<sup>th</sup>. What began as “Community Service Day” in Montgomery County 22 years ago has become a national day of service known nationally as “Make a Difference Day.” This year this day is part of President Obama’s “United We Serve” national campaign.

This effort to promote volunteerism is strongly supported by County Executive Ike Leggett through the Montgomery County Volunteer Center, which is reaching out to our Regional Service Center boards to develop their own projects. These projects can be completed in just a few hours and can be coordinated with local nonprofit organizations needing help. Let’s think of several projects we can do at the Center.

The other attachments included:

- ii. Response letter dated August 14, 2009 from County Council President Phil Andrews to Bill Strassberger, ECCAB Chair regarding ZTA 09-05 Burtonsville Overlay Zone;
- iii. Letter dated July 9, 2009 sent to Council President Phil Andrews by ECCAB chair expressing the board’s views on the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 09-05-Burtonsville Overlay Zone.
- iv. Letter dated July 28<sup>th</sup> 2009 from County Council President Phil Andrews to Bill Strassberger, ECCAB Chair regarding acquisition of property next to Fairland Recreational Park and McKnew Local Park;
- v. News Release on County Executive’s Pedestrian Safety Improvements on Fairland Road at Site and photographs;
- vi. Celebrate Montgomery County’s Community Services Day, Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> or October 25<sup>th</sup>
- vii. Letter from State Highway Administration (SHA) dated August 11, 2009 to Joy Nurmi, Director, EMRSC in response to her email regarding the intersection of MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) and Quaint Acres Drive.

Joy encouraged members to volunteer with projects at the Community Services Day on October 24<sup>th</sup>. We are happy to take your suggestions and asked members to call her or Chuck or Anjoo.

Chair Strassberger – recommended to refer the matter to Services Committee.

Joy Nurmi made additional announcements:

- a. extended her special thanks to Chuck Crisostomo who identified the site this year for the Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department to hold their Carnival on Route 198 East of Route 29.
- b. For updates on changes to the White Oak Recreation Center- asked members to review the White Oak Recreation Center online to obtain a copy of the updated plan
- c. Burtonsville Day – is scheduled September 26<sup>th</sup> and Chair Strassberger will pass around the member volunteer sign-up sheet. It is a great opportunity to meet with residents.
- d. The Barbeque cook-out was compliments from the East County Citizens Advisory Board and Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center staff.

### **Chair’s Report – Bill Strassberger**

1. Thanked Chuck Crisostomo and staff for the annual board cookout.

2. John Thomas has resigned the board and we will have a new board member at the October meeting. There is a vacancy for a member to serve as a liaison on the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) Committee. Asked members to share their interest to serve on the Committee.

Tom Aylward- added the DPS meetings are held once a month on Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. in Rockville, Maryland.

3. John Fausti would like to step down from the position of the Board Vice Chair due to personal reasons. We need to nominate a new Vice Chair to the board. The topic will be discussed under New Business. We can nominate members tonight and elect at the next meeting.

4. Welcomed Odessa Shannon, new board member and asked her for an introduction.

**Odessa Shannon** – introduced herself. She is retired and held position as a Director, Office of Human Rights, Montgomery County. Previously she worked with Federal Government and Board of Education. She is delighted to meet the board and be a part of the group.

Chair Strassberger -Ms. Shannon was asked to choose which sub-committee she would like to serve on.

5. September 26<sup>th</sup> is Burtonsville Day. Distributed the sign-up sheet for members to volunteer.

6. Tour of FDA and East County Location – proposed dates October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>.  
Asked members to check their schedule and email the date that works.

7. Shared comments on the letter by Council member Phil Andrews dated August 14<sup>th</sup> regarding ECCAB's support for ZTA 09-05 Burtonsville Overlay Zone. After the July 28<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing the Council has referred ZTA 09-05 to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee for their recommendation. The matter is on the PHED Committee's September 14 agenda.

8. The EZ Storage issue came up at the July meeting. The matter was referred to the Economic Development Committee.

EZ storage was interested in attending a ECCAB meeting. They could attend the October meeting. Any issues on ZTA 09-05 will be discussed under New Business.

#### **Council's Report:**

**Mara Paker, Councilmember Marc Elrich**

The Council is preparing to consider ZTA 09-05.

**Chair Strassberger** - asked to share information with Tom Aylward and Joy Nurmi.

#### **Committee Reports –**

**Outreach Committee: Marva Deskins Esq.**

The committee met and Amjad M. Chaudhry has been appointed as the new Chair of the Outreach Committee. The committee discussed holding an Art Show.

**Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee:**

Tom Aylward was not present for the meeting.

**Services Committee: Anthony Ramirez, Chair**

The committee could not meet in July 2009. The committee is looking for members to serve on the committee. Odessa Shannon was asked her preference to join a committee and she volunteered to serve on the outreach committee.

**Old Business** : asked members to sign up for the Burtonsville Day.

Amjad M. Chaudhry – gave an update on the Bait-ur-Rehman Mosque. The mosque has added two additional halls – one for women and one for men. Ramadan is being observed and invited members to visit the mosque and for lunch.

**New Business**

Chair Strassberger – The Board is seeking nomination for a Vice Chair.

Allan Mulligan – nominated Marva Deskins for the position of the ECCAB Vice Chair.

Vanessa Ali – supported the nomination.

Chair Strassberger–

**[September 2, 2009 - 2]** A motion to nominate Marva Deskins as the Vice Chair of ECCAB was offered. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Chair Strassberger and members – applauded Marva Deskins on her appointment as the Vice Chair of ECCAB.

Kim Bobola- remarked on Marva Deskins’ outstanding contribution to the East County Leadership Summit and congratulated her.

Tom Aylward –suggested that the Board needs to recognize Stuart Rochester’s efforts. A plaque with his contributions to East County could be placed in the Library or Recreation Center. The board members discussed.

Allan Mulligan – agreed with Tom Aylward’s suggestion.

Eric G. Luedtke – suggested asking the approval of Mr. Rochester’s family.

Dwayne Parris – spoke highly about Stuart Rochester. He was an inspiration to the community and was very humble by nature. We should respect his contributions and have a plaque in his honor.

Anthony Ramirez: suggested the matter be moved to the Services Committee.

Nancy Navarro – mentioned that the Council will be informed and will be supportive.

**[September 2, 2009 - 3]]** A motion was made to recognize Mr. Stuart Rochester's contributions to East County. It was referred to the Services Committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

**Announcements:**

**Chair Strassberger** –announced

1. Burtonsville Fire Department is holding a Carnival and asked members to support the event.
2. A group picture will be taken today before leaving.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. **The next meeting of ECCAB is scheduled for October 7<sup>th</sup> 2009.**